

## ***Measuring entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems – reflections from the workshop in Glasgow 7-8 May, 2019***

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In May, more than 60 academics, practitioners and policy-makers from the UK and Japan met at the University of Glasgow under the auspices of the ESRC funded, **Entrepreneurial and Innovation Ecosystems in the UK and Japan – Place-based scenarios and options**. The two-day workshop aimed to develop new, more granulated understanding of the heterogeneous nature of ecosystems and their complex interactions with public policies in the two countries. The following seven themes emerged from these discussions.

### ***1. Place matters and places are different***

A focus on national ecosystems does not explain sub-national variations in entrepreneurial activity. Moreover, most of the sub-national focus is on city regions – but there are spatial disparities and different institutional conditions - what about rural and small town ecosystems? One size does not fit all, and the ecosystem concept itself does not give us magic solutions to place-based issues.

### ***2. Unpacking the ‘black box’ approach to ‘processes’***

Approaches to measurement need both quantitative and qualitative elements to be able to better assess and understand the place-specific ecosystem conditions. Metrics and need to go beyond proxy measurements. The biases in the data bases used in econometric analysis need to be recognised and understood. There are limits to what we can meaningfully measure. We need a more contextualized and detailed understanding of processes, enablers and constraints on place-based ecosystems.

### ***3. Combined and innovative methodological approaches***

New and innovative measurement approaches are developing in addition to firm-level analysis. These include different units of analysis (e.g. networks; co-working; events; ideas), which highlight interactions and relational dimensions among actors. The use of social media is one promising micro-foundational approaches to better understand interactive and relational nature of the ecosystem in a systematic way.

### ***4. Historical and longitudinal approach to analyse change over time***

It is important to understand how different resources and capabilities (e.g. human, financial, technological) are *recycled* in the ecosystem, and move between ecosystems (e.g. mobility of talents, graduate start-ups). Local capability changes over time, and support mechanisms need to evolve accordingly.

### ***5. Blind spots in the existing data and issues of inclusivity in the ecosystem***

The policy focus on high tech and high growth entrepreneurship results in certain assumptions and *blind spots* in the existing ecosystem frameworks and data-sets. We need to be more conscious of the boundaries of the ecosystem and the actors who are visible, involved, and being measured in the existing system. We should note that data availability is driving much of the research agenda.

### ***6. Diversity and links between innovation and entrepreneurship***

The forms and nature of both innovation and entrepreneurship are diverse - ‘early adoption’ may be more important (for example, for SMEs) than new knowledge generation. Our understanding is limited in terms of the relationships between (open) innovation and entrepreneurship activities *in* and *across* the ecosystems. What kind of support may help nurture the synergistic links, locally, nationally and internationally?

### ***7. Measuring and benchmarking can help place-based learning***

Measuring and benchmarking place-based ecosystem may enable us to learn from similar and different regions. How different are the learning experiences and opportunities that are ***embedded*** and ***communicated*** in and across the ecosystems? Cultural, social and institutional differences also need to be recognised. Lessons can also be learnt from different contexts.